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SOME SKETCHES FROM THE PRESENT WAR.

RAVAGES OF DISEASE AMONG THE SOLDIERS.—In England we are accustomed to see our soldiers full of robust health—here the men are bronzed with exposure to the sun and air; but they have got thin, and the muscles of their legs and arms are in an alarming state of softness. I felt the arms and legs of many, and those not men that were on the sick list; and I was quite startled by their leanness, and the unhealthy, relaxed condition of the muscles. The generality of the men complain, not of the hunger, but of want of appetite. They can not eat their food, feel weak, and are unable to move.

The disease which has broken out among our troops, is cholera in its most malignant form. It has attacked all the regiments, but chiefly those who were more exposed to the currents of air that swept along and carried up the mists from the Dewna lake. In the Rifle Brigade a few cases only occurred, and the 76th regiment was spared for several days; nor did the germs of disease declare themselves until after their dislocation from Dewna to Monastir. The 33rd suffered severely. The 88th, too, had serious losses; but the regiments which were most exposed to the poisonous breath of the lake, are the 23rd Welsh Fusiliers and the 7th. They were the first to have the disease, and lost the greatest number of men. The first case occurred in the 23rd, when two men were attacked with cholera, and died within seven hours after the first symptoms had shown themselves. Those symptoms were almost identical in all cases. There was the pale jace, the up-turned eyes, the whitish wrinkled hands, with cramped fingers, and the crampy disposition of the body generally, which those who have seen the malignant forms of cholera know so well, and against which, they also know, medical aid is of little or no avail. A great many of the patients were in a state of hopeless collapse from first to last; some were quite blue, and the only description which applies to some of them is, that they were 'living corpses.'

The French losses from cholera are frightful. The disease is not much on the wane among them, and there are divisions in which they die at the rate of seventy and eighty a-day. In the French general hospital, since the 14th of July, 720 men have died of the cholera, and only seventy-eight men have been sent out cured. Men sent in there with fevers and other disorders, were frequently attacked with the cholera in its worst form, and died with unusual rapidity, in spite of all that could be done to save them. Along two sides of the hospital was drawn up a long train of araba carts; and by the moonlight I could see that some of them were filled with sick soldiers. I counted thirty-five carts, with three or four men in each. These were sick French soldiers sent in from the camps, and waiting till room could be found for them in the hospital. A number of soldiers were sitting down by the road side, and here and there the moonbeams flashed brightly off their piled arms. The men were silent; not a song, not a laugh! A gloom, which never had I seen before among French troops, reigned amid these groups of grey-coated men, and the quiet that prevailed was only broken now and then by the moans and cries of pain of the poor sufferers in the carts. Observing that about fifteen arabas were drawn up without any occupants, I asked a sub-officer for what purpose were they required. His answer, sullen and short, was,—'For the dead—for dead Frenchmen sir.' The white walls of the fatal hospital looked clean and neat as they towered above the

lengthened *cortege* of the dead which lay in deep shadow at its base; but the murmurings of sickness, and the groans of the dying, stole out on the night air through the long lines of latticed windows. As I turned away, and spurred under the gateway which leads to the English quarter, I encountered a burial party escorting the bodies of six of our own poor fellows to their last resting-place, outside the walls by the sea beach of Varna. Above 7000 of the French and 3000 of the English are said to have perished of cholera.

Up to the present time (Aug. 8,) we have lost about thirty men from cholera in the regiment. A division of Zouaves, which left this a fortnight ago, returned the day before yesterday so reduced in numbers that two small steamers sufficed to bring back the remnant. According to their own account, they lost 3000 men in three days. They have been sent to Kostendje, at the mouth of the Danube. For the first two days they were there, all went on well; after that they began to drop down dead suddenly, and to die off in an hour or two by the hundred; in fact, one battalion of 1200 left 600 dead behind them. A great deal of this was owing, no doubt, to the poisonous condition of the water which they drank, all the wells being filled with dead bodies of Turks and Russians. Those that have come back are hollow-cheeked and miserable looking fellows, and are dying here in shoals. In fact, without exaggeration, the French bury their dead in fifties. A third of the men have been already taken away by disease, that would have been lost at Sebastopol.

In twenty hours, says a letter of Aug. 19, fifty men died in the *Britannia*, and thirty in the next twenty hours. Those who have only witnessed the effects of this fatal pest on land, can hardly imagine the additional horror which accompanies its progress at sea. Let them imagine a thousand men narrowly caged in a floating box: a heavy sea obliges them to close all the ports; so that, notwithstanding all the appliances of air-sails, &c., the air at night becomes abominably tainted below. Fifty or sixty robust men, in the prime of life, are suddenly, almost in an instant, struck with the death-agony raving, perhaps, or convulsed, in the midst of this dense mass of sleepers. Who can tell the horror of such a scene? It was enough to quell the bravest spirit, or to destroy the balance of even a well-poised brain. But in each of the ships both men and officers did their duty most nobly in these trying hours. The generous self-devotion of the men to their dying comrades was to the last degree touching. They nursed them, cheered them, and waited on them indefatigably, and with all the gentleness and tact of women; while the officers divided themselves into watches, and generally superintended and aided the doctors in their arduous duties. No man shrank from the disagreeable, but manfully went through his dreadful duty. Some of the men nursed three sets of sick, and at length fell themselves. As for the poor sailmakers—whose trying task it was to sew up the bodies in hammocks hour after hour, without rest—some died, and others were fairly worn out. Every man and officer was so weakened and debilitated, that the ordinary duties of working the sails of the ponderous ships could scarcely be carried on. . . . The *Britannia* has suffered most, about 100; *Furious* about 17, *Albion* 50, and *Trafalgar* 35.

‘The French loss has been far more severe than the English. It is stated that 200 men had died in the *Ville de Paris*, and 200 in the *Montebello*.

TREATMENT AND SUFFERINGS OF THE SICK AND WOUNDED.—The sufferings on board the *Vulcan* were bad enough. There were 300 wounded, and 170 cholera patients, and these were attended to by four surgeons. The scene was terrible. The wounded seized the surgeons by the skirts as they picked their way through the heaps of dying and dead; but the surgeons shook them off. It may be expected, and perhaps was right, that the

officers should receive the principal attention, and they possibly required the almost undivided labour of four men; but some one must be in fault when large bodies of wounded men are put on board a ship with no one to give them surgical assistance, or even supply their necessary wants. Numbers arrived at Sentara without having been touched by a surgeon since they fell pierced by Russian bullets on the slopes of the Alma. Their wounds were stiff and their strength exhausted as they were lifted out of the boats to be carried to the hospital, where, fortunately, surgical aid may be obtained.

But all other horrors sink into insignificance compared with the state of the unfortunate passengers by the *Colomba*. This vessel left the Crimea on the morning of the 24th. Wounded men were being placed on board for two days before she sailed, and when she weighed anchor she carried the following numbers:—27 wounded officers, 422 wounded soldiers, and 104 Russian prisoners—in all 553 souls. About half of the wounded had received surgical assistance before they were put on board. To supply the wants of this mass of misery were four medical men, one of whom was surgeon of the ship, sufficiently employed in looking after the crew, who at this place and season are seldom free from sickness. The ship was literally covered with prostrate forms, so as to be almost unmanageable. The officers could not get below to find their sextants, and the run was made at hazard. The vessel was at sea twelve hours longer through this mischance.

The worst cases were placed on the upper deck, which in a day or two became a mass of putridity. The neglected gunshot wounds bred maggots, which crawled in every direction, infecting the food of the unhappy beings on board. The putrid animal matter caused such a stench that the officers and crew were nearly overcome, and the captain is now ill from the effects of the five days misery. All the blankets, to the number of 1500, have been thrown overboard useless. Thirty men died during the voyage. The surgeons worked as hard as possible, but could do little among so many; and many an unfortunate fellow first came under a medical man's hand on his arrival at Scutari, six days after the battle.

It was a moving sight yesterday, says a letter from Constantinople, to see the long trains of wounded born from the Andes and Vulcan to the hospital. From dawn to evening the labour was incessant, and the officers and medical men seemed perfectly worn out with fatigue. The men carried down mattresses to the beach; the wounded were lifted on them, and were slowly borne along. Every one who could work, lent a hand with eagerness to this duty, which the convalescents of the hospital, bearing on their faces the marks of recent suffering, discharged for the new comers. A few of the wounded were well enough to walk, and crept along, supported by a comrade; one with his arm in a sling; another with his trowsers cut open from the hip to the knee, and the thigh swathed in bandages; another with his hair clotted with blood, and a gashly wound on the face or head. On many the marks of approaching death were set; every now and then there was one too far gone to be carried to the hospital, or who asked to be laid down for a moment's rest on the wayside. The surgeons within were fully engaged, for the unfortunates brought under their care had been taken four miles from the place where they had fallen to the beach, and then transported over 400 miles of sea; so that, whatever may have been the care of their former attendants, yet there was much to be changed on their arrival, and many operations to be performed which had not been necessary before, or which had been omitted through want of time, space or opportunity. About seven hundred were brought down by the Andes and Vulcan, and the remainder are expected to-day by the *Simoom*. All that the vigilant attendance of devoted officers can do is being done; for, though only actively employed since the

return of the first sick from the Crimea, many of the surgeons seem, through excess of work, almost as exhausted as those under their care. For forty-eight hours many of them have had scarcely a moment's relaxation from their labours. * * It is easy to discover by a walk through the barracks, how much the unfortunate 23rd and 33rd Regiments have suffered. It seems that almost half of those who are lying on every side in mortal agony, belong to one of these ill-fated corps. The 23rd, it is said, has lost more than four hundred men.

SUICIDAL EXCEPTIONS TO PEACE.

Almost every body we meet in these days are Friends of Peace—with *an exception*. 'You are quite right,' says one after another to us, with countenances quite radiant with a consciousness of their own candour, 'you are quite right in regard to the general principle. War is a horrible thing, utterly repugnant to the spirit of Christianity, and inflicting unspeakable evils on humanity. I go with you entirely except——.' But then, as each one has a separate exception in favour of some special conception or crotchet of his own, they become at last so numerous that the poor principle for which each professes great reverence 'in general,' is completely riddled with exceptions. And thus, while the great bulk of our peaceful sympathisers emphatically declare their belief, that a large proportion of the wars recorded in history were utterly unjustifiable, we venture to say, that there is scarcely one of those wars for which a very plausible pretext might not be found under cover of one or other of the exceptions they themselves urge.

Christians of conservative sentiments, for instance, will say—'Oh, yes; war is a great curse and calamity, except when it is necessary to preserve order and put down those vile revolutionists and democrats, who threaten to involve the whole social system in anarchy and ruin.' Friends of liberty, on the other hand, exclaim, 'Yes, yes! war is a shocking thing, except when it is undertaken to advance the cause of struggling democracy, and to overthrow the abominable despotisms which prevent the establishment of free constitutional or republican governments.' Very zealous Protestants, again, who are nightly bestridden with a Jesuit incubus, will tell you, 'No man can abhor war more than we do; but for the sake of destroying the frightful conspiracy against our Protestant faith and freedom which is gathering on the Continent, we should be glad even to see that curse abroad.'

Then come the zealous champions of religious liberty. 'War,' say they, 'is a hideous display of human depravity; but rather than that our ministers should be expelled from Hungary, or the Madiahs be imprisoned for reading the Bible, we are willing that this tide of human depravity should be let forth to inundate Europe.' The advocates of Bible and Missionary Societies will then put in their plea. 'All you say is very true; war is a tremendous scourge, and a bitter sarcasm on the christian doctrine of love; but where there are nations who won't accept the Bible, or admit our missionaries, why then, my dear sir, it may be necessary to send our cannon before us, to prepare the way of the Lord, and open a path for the gospel.'

Next come a band of Christians with strongly prophetic propensities, and urge *their* exceptions. 'War is no doubt, as you affirm, an infinite evil; but according to our scheme of prophetic interpretation, it is absolutely necessary at this time, and therefore, though we of course bewail its calamities, we cannot pray for the continuance of a peace which would only spoil our whole prophetic system.' And so we may go on through an endless assortment of other exceptions. Some will fight for the extension of our commerce, and for nothing else. Some will fight now, because if we don't,